

**JOHN  
ROBY**



***TRADITIONS  
OF LANCASHIRE  
(THE COMPLETE  
TWO-VOLUME  
EDITION)***

**John Roby**

# **Traditions of Lancashire (The Complete Two-Volume Edition)**

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# MEMOIR OF THE AUTHOR. [5]

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The late John Roby was born at Wigan on the 5th January 1793. From his father, Nehemiah Roby, who was for many years Master of the Grammar-School at Haigh, near Wigan, he inherited a good constitution and unbended principles of honour and integrity. From the family of his mother, Mary Aspoll, he derived the quick, impressible temperament of genius, and the love of humour which so conspicuously marks the Lancashire character. He was the youngest child. His thirst for knowledge was early and strongly manifested. Being once told in childhood not to be so inquisitive, his appeal ever after was, "*Inquisitive* wants to know." As he grew up into boyhood, surrounded by objects to which tradition had assigned her marvellous stories, they sank silently but indelibly into his mind. In his immediate vicinity were Haigh Hall and Mab's Cross, the scenes of Lady Mabel's sufferings and penance—the subject of one of his earliest tales. Almost within sight of the windows lay the fine range of hills of which Rivington Pike is a spur. In after-life he recalled with pleasure the many sports in that district which were the haunts of his early days, and the scenes of the legends he afterwards embodied. While yet a child he regularly took the organ in a chapel at Wigan during the Sunday service. He also early excelled in drawing, and after he had commenced the avocations of a banker the use of the pencil was a favourite recreation. His first prose composition, at the age of fifteen years, took a prize in a

periodical for the best essay on a prescribed subject, by young persons under a specified age. Thus encouraged, poetry, essay, tale, were all tried, and with success. In his eighteenth or nineteenth year he received a silver snuff-box, inscribed, "The gift of the Philosophic Society, Wigan, to their esteemed lecturer and worthy member."

Mr. Roby first appeared before the public as a poet; publishing in 1815, "Sir Bertram, a poem in six cantos." Another poem quickly followed, entitled "Lorenzo, a tale of Redemption." In 1816, he married Ann, the youngest daughter of James and Dorothy Bealey, of Derriken, near Blackburn, by whom he had nine children, three of whom died in their infancy. His next publication was "The Duke of Mantua," a tragedy, which appeared in 1823, passed through three or four editions in a short time, and after being long out of print, was included in the posthumous volume of *Legendary Remains*. In the summer of that year he made an excursion in Scotland, visiting "the bonnie braes o' Yarrow" in company with James Hogg, the Ettrick Shepherd. The literary leisure of the next six years was occupied in collecting materials for the *Traditions of Lancashire*, and in weaving these into tales of romantic interest. In this task he received the most courteous assistance from several representatives of noble houses connected with the traditions of the county; particularly from the late Earl and Countess of Crawford and Balcarres, and also from the late Earl of Derby.

The *first* series of *The Traditions of Lancashire* appeared in 1829, in two volumes (including twenty tales), illustrated by plates. The reception of the work equalled Mr. Roby's



most sanguine expectations; and a second edition was called for within twelve months. The late Sir Francis Palgrave, in a letter to Mr. Roby, dated 26th October 1829, thus estimates the work:—

"As compositions, the extreme beauty of your style, and the skill which you have shown in working up the rude materials, must entitle them to the highest rank in the class of work to which they belong.... You have made such a valuable addition, not only to English literature, but to English topography, by your collection—for these popular traditions form, or ought to form, an important feature in topographical history—that it is to be hoped you will not stop with the present volumes."

The *second* series of the "Traditions," consisting also of two volumes (including twenty tales), uniform with the first, was published in 1831, and met with similar success. Both series were reviewed in the most cordial manner by the leading periodicals of the day; while they were more than once quoted by Sir Walter Scott, who characterised the whole as an elegant work. In the production of these tales, Mr. Roby's practice was to make himself master of the historical groundwork of the story, and as far as possible of the manners and customs of the period, and then to commence composition, with Fosbroke's *Encyclopedia of Antiquities* at hand, for accuracy of costume, &c. He always gave the credit of his style, which the *Westminster Review* termed "a very model of good Saxon," to his native county, the force and energy of whose dialect arises mainly from the

prevalence of the Teutonic element. "The thought digs out the word," was his favourite saying, when the exact expression he wanted did not at once occur. In these "Traditions" his great creative power is conspicuous; about two hundred different characters are introduced, no one of which reminds the reader of another, while there is abundant diversity of both heroic and comic incident and adventure. A gentleman, after reading the "Traditions," remarked that for invention he scarcely knew Mr. Roby's equal. All these characters, it should be stated, are creations: not one is an idealised portrait. The short vivid descriptions of scenery scattered throughout are admirable. Each tale is, in fact, a cabinet picture, combining history and romance with landscape. Mr. Roby excelled in depicting the supernatural; and one German reviewer declared his story of Rivington Pike to be "the only authentic tale of demoniacal possession the English have."

In 1832, Mr. Roby visited the English lakes, and recorded his impressions in lively sketches both with pen and pencil. In the spring of 1837, he made a rapid tour on the Continent, the notes and illustrative sketches of which were published in two volumes, under the title of *Seven Weeks in Belgium, Switzerland, Lombardy, Piedmont, Savoy, &c.* In 1840, Mr. Roby again visited the Continent by a different route, making notes and sketches of what he saw. At the close of the year, he was engaged in preparing a new edition of the "Traditions," in a less expensive form. It was published in three volumes, as the first of a series of Popular Traditions of England; his intention being to follow up those of Lancashire with similar legends of Yorkshire, for which he

wrote a few tales, which appeared in Blackwood's and Eraser's Magazines.

The principal literary occupation of the next four years appears to have been the preparation and delivery of lectures on various subjects in connection with literary and mechanics' institutions. In 1844, his health gave way, and for years he suffered severely. As a last resource he tried the water-cure at Malvern in the spring of 1847, and with complete success. In the summer of 1849, he again married—the lady who survived him, and to whose "sketch of his life" we are largely indebted in this brief memoir. In the two short years following this marriage—the two last of his life—he was busily engaged in writing and delivering lectures, visiting places which form the scenes of some of his latest legends, and in the composition of a series of tales intended to illustrate the influence of Christianity in successive periods, a century apart. Deferring that for the fourth century, he wrote six, bringing the series down to the close of the seventh century; when he determined on visiting Scotland. With his wife and daughter he embarked at Liverpool on board the steamer *Orion* for Glasgow, which ill-fated vessel struck on some rocks about one o'clock in the morning of the 18th June 1850, and went down. Mrs. and Miss Roby were rescued after having been some time in the water, but of the husband and father only the corpse was recovered, and his remains were laid in his family grave in the burial-ground of the Independent Chapel, Rochdale, on Saturday, the 22d of that month.

Mr. Roby was not more remarkable for his numerous and varied talents than for his warm and affectionate heart, rich

imagination, great love of humour, and deep and earnest piety. He was a facile versifier, an elegant prose writer, an able botanist and physiologist. Possessing a fine ear, rich voice, and great musical taste, he not only took his vocal share in part-song, but wrote several melodies, which have been published. In one species of rapid mental calculation, or rather combination of figures—giving in an instant the sum of a double column of twenty figures in each row, or a square of six figures—he far excelled Bidder, the calculating boy. He was a skilful draughtsman, a clever mimic and ventriloquist, an excellent *raconteur*, an accomplished conversationist, ever fascinating in the select social circle, and always "tender and wise" in that of home. He was a man of genuine benevolence, a cordial friend, an affectionate husband and father, and a humble and devout Christian. His family crest was a garb or wheat-sheaf, with the motto, "I am ready;" and in his case—though his death was sudden and unexpected—illness and bereavement, mental and physical suffering—in short, the chastenings and discipline of life, had done their work. His "sheaf" was "ready for the garner."

*October 1866.*

## **FOOTNOTES:**

[5] This Memoir has been almost wholly derived from the "Sketch of the Literary Life and Character of John Roby," written by his widow, and occupying 117 pages of the posthumous volume of his *Legendary and Poetical Remains*.

# **PREFACE TO THE FIRST SERIES.**

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A preface is rarely needed, generally intrusive, and always tiresome—seldom read, more seldom desiderated: a piece of egotism at best, where the author, speaking of himself, has the less chance of being listened to. Yet—and what speaker does not think he ought to be heard?—the author conceives there may be some necessity, some reason, why he should step forward for the purpose of explaining his views in connection with the character and design of the following pages.

In the northern counties, and more particularly in Lancashire, the great arena of the STANLEYS during the civil wars—where the progress and successful issue of his cause was but too confidently anticipated by CHARLES STUART, and the scene especially of those strange and unholy proceedings in which the "Lancashire witches" rendered themselves so famous—it may readily be imagined that a number of interesting legends, anecdotes, and scraps of family history, are floating about, hitherto preserved chiefly in the shape of oral tradition. The antiquary, in most instances, rejects the information that does not present itself in the form of an authentic and well-attested fact; and legendary lore, in particular, he throws aside as worthless and unprofitable. The author of the "TRADITIONS OF LANCASHIRE," in leaving the dry and heraldic pedigrees which unfortunately constitute the great bulk of those works that bear the name of county histories, enters on the more

entertaining, though sometimes apocryphal narratives, which exemplify and embellish the records of our forefathers.

A native of Lancashire, and residing there during the greater part of his life, he has been enabled to collect a mass of local traditions, now fast dying from the memories of the inhabitants. It is his object to perpetuate these interesting relics of the past, and to present them in a form that may be generally acceptable, divested of the dust and dross in which the originals are but too often disfigured, so as to appear worthless and uninviting.

Tradition is not an unacceptable source of historical inquiry; and the writer who disdains to follow these glimmerings of truth will often find himself in the dark, with nothing but his own opinions—the smouldering vapour of his own imagination—to guide him in the search.

The following extract from a German writer on the subject sufficiently exemplifies and illustrates the design the author has generally had before him in the composition and arrangement of the following legends:—

"Simple and unimportant as the subject may at first appear, it will be found, upon a nearer view, well worth the attention of philosophical and historical inquirers. All genuine, popular Tales, arranged with local and national reference, cannot fail to throw light upon contemporary events in history, upon the progressive cultivation of society, and upon the prevailing modes of thinking in every age. Though not consisting of a recital of bare facts, they are in most instances founded upon fact, and in so far connected with history, which occasionally, indeed, borrows

from, and as often reflects light upon, these familiar annals, these more private and interesting casualties of human life.

"It is thus that popular tradition, connected with all that is most interesting in human history and human action, upon a national scale—a mirror reflecting the people's past worth and wisdom—invariably possesses so deep a hold upon its affections, and offers so many instructive hints to the man of the world, to the statesman, the citizen, and the peasant.

"Signs of approaching changes, no less in manners than in states, may likewise be traced, floating down this popular current of opinions, fertilising the seeds scattered by a past generation, and marking by its ebbs and flows the state of the political atmosphere, and the distant gathering of the storm.

"National traditions further serve to throw light upon ancient and modern mythology; and in many instances they are known to preserve traces of their fabulous descent, as will clearly appear in some of the following selections. It is the same with those of all nations, whether of eastern or western origin, Greek, Scythian, or Kamtschatkan. And hence, among every people just emerged out of a state of barbarism, the same causes lead to the production of similar compositions; and a chain of connection is thus established between the fables of different nations, only varied by clime and custom, sufficient to prove, not merely a degree of harmony, but secret interchanges and communications."

A record of the freaks of such airy beings, glancing through the mists of national superstition, would prove little

inferior in poetical interest and association to the fanciful creations of the Greek mythology. The truth is, they are of one family, and we often discover allusions to the beautiful fable of Psyche or the story of Midas; sometimes with the addition, that the latter was obliged to admit his barber into his uncomfortable secret. Odin and Jupiter are brothers, if not the same person; and the northern Hercules is often represented as drawing a strong man by almost invisible threads, which pass from his tongue round the limbs of the victim, thereby symbolising the power of eloquence. Several incidents in the following tales will be recognised by those conversant with Scandinavian literature, thus adding another link to the chain of certainty which unites the human race, or at any rate that part of it from which Europe was originally peopled, in one original tribe or family.

A work of this nature, embodying the material of our own island traditions, has not yet been attempted; and the writer confidently hopes that these tales may be found fully capable of awakening and sustaining the peculiar and high-wrought interest inherent in the legends of our continental neighbours. Should they fail of producing this effect, he requests that it may be attributed rather to his want of power to conjure up the spirits of past ages, than to any want of capabilities in the subjects he has chosen to introduce.

To the local and to the general reader—to the antiquary and the uninitiated—to the admirers of the fine arts and embellishments of our literature, he hopes his labours will prove acceptable; and should the plan succeed, not Lancashire alone, but the other counties, may in their turn



become the subject of similar illustrations. The tales are arranged chronologically, forming a somewhat irregular series from the earliest records to those of a comparatively modern date. They may in point of style appear at the commencement stiff and stalwart, like the chiselled warriors, whose deeds are generally enveloped in a rude narrative, hard and ponderous as their gaunt and grisly effigies. The events, however, as the author has found them, gradually assimilate with the familiar aspects and everyday affections of our nature—subsiding from the stern and repulsive character of a barbarous age into the usual forms and modes of feeling incident to humanity—as some cold and barren region, where one stunted blade of affection can scarce find shelter, gradually opens out into the quiet glades and lowly habitudes of ordinary existence.

The author disclaims all pretensions to superior knowledge. He would not even arrogate to himself the name of antiquary. Some of the incidents are perhaps well known, being merely put into a novel and more popular shape. The spectator is here placed upon an eminence where the scenes assume a new aspect, new combinations of beauty and grandeur being the result of the vantage ground he has obtained. Nothing more is attempted than what others, with the same opportunities, might have done as well—perhaps better. When Columbus broke the egg—if we may be excused the arrogance of the simile—all that were present could have done the same; and some, no doubt, might have performed the operation more dexterously.

*1st October 1829.*

# **PREFACE TO THE SECOND SERIES.**

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In presenting another and concluding series of Lancashire Traditions to the public, the author has to express his thanks for the indulgence he has received, and the spirit of candour and kindness with which this attempt to illustrate in a novel manner the legends of his native county has been viewed by the periodical press.

To his numerous readers, in the capacity of an author, he would say Farewell, did not the "everlasting adieus," everlastingly repeated, warn him that he might at some future time be subject to the same infirmity, only rendered more conspicuous by weakness and irresolution.

Rochdale, *October* 1831.

# INTRODUCTION TO THE SECOND SERIES.

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No method has yet been discovered for preserving the recollection of human actions and events precisely as they have occurred, whole and unimpaired, in all their truth and reality. Time is an able teacher of causes and qualities, but he setteth little store by names and persons, or the mould and fashion of their deeds. The pyramids have outlived the very names of their builders. "Oblivion," says Sir Thomas Browne, "blindly scatters her poppies. Time has spared the epitaph of Adrian's horse—confounded that of himself!"

Few things are so durable as the memory of those mischiefs and oppressions which Time has bequeathed to mankind. The names of conquerors and tyrants have been faithfully preserved, while those from whom have originated the most useful and beneficial discoveries are entirely unknown, or left to perish in darkness and uncertainty. We should not have known that Lucullus brought cherries from the banks of the Phasis but through the details of massacre and spoliation—the splendid barbarities of a Roman triumph. In some instances Time displays a fondness and a caprice in which the gloomiest tyranny is seen occasionally to indulge. The unlettered Arab cherishes the memory of his line. He traces it unerringly to a remoter origin than could be claimed or identified by the most ancient princes of Europe. In many instances he could give a clearer and a higher genealogy to his horse. But that which Time herself

would spare, the critic and the historian would demolish. The northern barbarians are accused of an exterminating hostility to learning. It never was half so bitter as the warfare which learning displays against everything of which she herself is not the author. A living historian has denied that the poems of Ossian had any existence save in the conceptions of Macpherson, because he condescendingly informs us, "Before the invention or introduction of letters, human memory is incapable of any faithful record which may be transmitted from age to age."

The account which Macpherson gave may be a fiction, but it is admitted by those who know the native Scotch and Irish tongues, and have dwelt where no other language is spoken, that there are poems which have been transmitted from generation to generation (orally it must be, since letters are either entirely unknown or are comparatively of recent introduction), the machinery of which prove them to have been invented about the time when Christianity was first preached in these islands.

Tradition may well be named the eldest daughter of Time, and nursing-mother of the Muses—the fruitful parent of that very learning which would, in the cruel spirit of its pedantry and malice, make her the sacrifice while it lays claim to the inheritance. What is learning but a laborious, often ill-drawn, and almost invariably partial deduction from facts which tradition has first collected? When we consider in whose hands learning has been, almost ever since its creation; the uses which have been made of it by priests and politicians; by poets, orators, and flatterers; by controversialists and designing historians;—how commonly

has it been perverted to abuse the very senses of mankind, and to give a bias to their thoughts and feelings, only to mislead and to betray! Let the evidence be well compared, and a view taken of the respective amounts of doubt and certainty which appertain to human history as it appears in written records; and it will be seen that, to verify any given fact, so as to prevent the possibility of doubt, we must throw aside our reverence for the scholar's pen and the midnight lamp, which seem, like the faculty of speech, only given to men, as the witty Frenchman observed, "to conceal their thoughts." This comparative process is precisely what has been adopted by M.L. Petit Radel in his new theory upon the origin of Greece. "Not satisfied with the mythological equivocation and contradictory statements which till now have perplexed the question, after a residence of ten years this learned man returns with a new theory, which would destroy all our received ideas, and carry the civilisation and cradle of the Greeks much beyond the time and place that have till now been supposed. It is their very architecture that M. Petit Radel interrogates, and its passive testimony serves as a basis to his system. He has visited, compared, and meditated on the unequivocal vestiges of more than one hundred and fifty antique citadels, altogether neglected by the Greek and Roman authors. Their form and construction serve him, with the aid of ingenious reasoning, to prove that Greece was civilised a long time before the arrival of the Egyptian colonies. He does not despair of tracing back the descent of the Greeks to the Hyperborean nations, always by the analogy of their structures, which, by a singular identity, are found also among the Phoenicians.

The Institute have pronounced the following judgment upon his theory:—"If the developments which remain to be given to us suffice to gain the votes of the learned, and induce them to adopt this theory as demonstrated truth, M. L. Petit Radel may flatter himself with having made in history a discovery truly worthy to occupy a place in the progress of human genius."

Thus the very time in which a living historian of England has chosen to inflict an impotent blow, from the leaden sceptre of Johnsonian criticism, upon all facts which claim an existence anterior to the invention of books, appears pregnant with a discovery of a method of investigating the most remote eras, which presupposes an inherent spirit of fallacy and falsehood in all written records of their existence.

About three hundred years after the era of the Olympiads, the first date of authentic history, Herodotus astonished his countrymen by the writings he brought forth. Who kept the records out of which his work was elaborated ere he was ready to stamp the facts with the only seal which our modern historians will acknowledge or allow? Tradition doubtless was his guide, which the learned themselves complain of as the source of what they term his errors and his fables. But the voice of tradition has often reinstated his claims to our belief, where it had been suspended either by ignorance or pretensions to superior knowledge. A modern traveller found, in one of the isles of the Grecian Archipelago, undoubted vestiges of a state of society similar to that of the Amazons. The order of the sexes was wholly inverted. The wife ruled the husband, and his and her

kindred, with uncontrolled and unsparing rigour, sanctioned and even commanded by the laws. Yet the very existence of any such people as the Amazons of ancient history has not only been questioned, but denied. Learning has proved it to be impossible.

The Marquess of Hastings told the Rev. Mr. Swan, chaplain of the Cambrian, that he had found the germ of fact from which many of the most incredible tales in ancient history had grown during his stay in India. One instance only we would relate. A Grecian author mentions a people who had only one leg. An embassy from the interior was conducted into the presence of the viceroy, and he could by no persuasion prevail upon the obsequious minister to use more than one of his legs, though he stood during the whole of a protracted audience.

But there are other forces now drawing into the field to support the long-neglected claims of tradition. Etymology, which professed to settle doubts by an appeal to the elementary sounds of words, was banished from the politer and more influential circles of English learning by a decree as arbitrary as that pronounced on the poems of Ossian. It has come back with a new commission and under a new title;—Ethnography is the name given by our continental neighbours to this new science, which, in its future developments, may bring to light some of the most obscure and important circumstances affecting the human race, from its origin through every succeeding epoch of its existence. The distinguishing object of this inquiry is to identify the fortunes, migrations, and changes of the human family as to situation, policy, religion, agriculture, and arts,

by comparing the terms supplied by or introduced into the language of any one country with the names of the same objects in every other. There would be no such thing as chance in nature could we know the laws which determine every separate accident. In like manner there will scarcely be any doubt respecting the primitive history of man when this new science shall have accumulated and revealed all the treasures which it may be enabled to appropriate. An agreement in the primitive term which any object of cultivation, physical or moral, bears among many different tribes, spread over many and far-distant regions, will be considered as the best evidence of one common origin. Disagreement in a similar case, accompanied with a great variety of terms of considerable dissonance, will be equally conclusive as to the object being indigenous or of a multifarious origin.

Already has Balbi, in his *Ethnographic Atlas*, given us a list of names and coincidences to an extent truly astonishing. Yet what is this, in fact, but a judicious use of Bacon's old but much-neglected rule of questioning nature about facts instead of theories—examining evidences ere rhetoric had made language one vast heap of implied falsehood?

In a court of inquiry we examine witnesses as to facts, not opinions. But the historian reads mankind in cities; the philosopher in the clouds. He who is anxious for the truth should look abroad on the plains or in the woods, where man's first prerogative, the giving of names, was exercised. His knowledge of nature must be wretchedly imperfect who thinks that no grand outline of truth can possibly exist in the



dim records of human recollection ere the pen of the scholar was employed to depict the scenes that opinion or prejudice had created. How many pages of Clarendon's, Hume's, or even Robertson's history would be cancelled if we had access to all the recollections of each event, and the evidence of the unlettered vulgar who had witnessed the fact brought to our notice, even through the mouthpiece of tradition!

There is more truth than comes to the surface in that speech put into the lips of the father of lies by a late poet, where he says—

"The Bible's your book—history mine."

Savigny makes the same charge against one class of historians in his own country:—"However discordant," says he, "their other doctrines may appear, they agree in the practice of adopting each a particular system, and in viewing all historical evidence as so many proofs of its truth."

Were it not for that contempt we have already noticed as the offspring of pride and dogmatism, and which, in the administration of the republic of letters, has been entertained and openly proclaimed for every kind of history except that which its own acts may have originated, we should have been in possession of thousands of facts and notions now overlaid and lost irrecoverably to the philosopher and the historian.

The origin and the progress of nations, next after the school divinity of the Middle Ages, has occasioned the most copious outpouring of conjectural criticism. The simple

mode of research suggested by the works of Verstegan, Camden, and Spelman would, long before this time, have made the early history of the British tribes as clear as it is now obscure. Analogies in the primary sounds of each dialect; similarity or difference in regard to objects of the first, or of a common necessity; rules or laws for the succession of property, which are as various as the tribes which overran the empire; the nature, agreement, or dissimilarity in religious worship with those vestiges of its ritual and celebration which, by the "pious frauds" and connivance of the early church, still lurk in the pastimes of our rural districts:—the new science of which we have spoken, by taking cognisance of these and all other existing sources of legitimate investigation, will settle the source and affinities of nations upon a plan as much superior to that of Grotius and his school as fact and reason exceed the guess-work of the theorist and the historian. Meantime we would cite a few examples that illustrate and bear more particularly on the subject to which our inquiries have been directed.

Nothing seems at first sight more difficult than to establish a community of origin between the gods of Olympus and those of the Scandinavian mythology. The attempt has often been made, and each time with increased success. Observe the process adopted in this interesting inquiry.

"Every country in Europe has invested its popular fictions with the same common marvels—all acknowledge the agency of the lifeless productions of nature; the intervention of the same supernatural machinery; the existence of elves,

fairies, dwarfs, giants, witches, and enchanters; the use of spells, charms, and amulets, and all those highly-gifted objects, of whatever form or name, whose attributes refute every principle of human experience, which are to conceal the possessor's person, annihilate the bounds of space, or command a gratification of all our wishes. These are the constantly-recurring types which embellish the popular tale: which have been transferred to the more laboured pages of romance; and which, far from owing their first appearance in Europe to the Arabic conquest of Spain, or the migrations of Odin to Scandinavia, are known to have been current on its eastern verge long anterior to the era of legitimate history. The Nereids of antiquity, the daughters of the 'sea-born seer,' are evidently the same with the mermaids of the British and northern shores. The inhabitants of both are fixed in crystal caves or coral palaces beneath the waters of the ocean; they are alike distinguished for their partialities to the human race, and their prophetic powers in disclosing the events of futurity. The Naiads differ only in name from the Nixen of Germany and Scandinavia (Nisser), or the water-elves of our countrymen. Ælfric and the Nornæ, who wove the web of life, and sang the fortunes of the illustrious Helga, are but the same companions who attended Ilithyia at the births of Iamos and Hercules," the venerable Parcæ of antiquity.

The Russian Rusalkis are of the same family. The man-in-the-moon has found a circulation throughout the world. "The clash of elements in the thunder-storm was ascribed in Hellas to the rolling chariot-wheels of Jove, and in the

Scandinavian mythology to the ponderous waggon of the Norwegian Thor."

To the above extract, which is taken from the excellent preface by the editor to Wharton's *History of English Poetry*, may be added the number of high peaks bearing the name of Tor or Thor, seen more especially on both coasts of Devonshire, and which are supposed to signalise the places of his worship.<sup>[6]</sup> From the same source may be derived affinities equally strong between the Highland Urisks, the Russian Leschies, the Pomeranian or Wendish Berstucs, and the Panes and Panisci who presided over the fields and forests of Arcadia. The mountains of Germany and Scandinavia are under the governance of a set of metallurgic divinities, who agree with the Cabiri, Hephæsti, Telchines, and Idæan Dactyli. The Brownies and Fairies are of the same kindred as the Lares of Latium. "The English Puck, the Scottish Bogle, the French Esprit Follet, or Goblin, the Gobelinus of monkish Latinity, and the German Kobold, are only varied names for the Grecian Kobalus, whose sole delight consisted in perplexing the human race, and calling up those harmless terrors that constantly hover round the minds of the timid." "The English and Scottish terms, '*Puck*,' '*Bogle*,' are the same as the German '*Spuk*' and the Danish '*Spogelse*,' without the sibilant aspiration. These words are general names for any kind of spirit, and correspond to the '*pouk*' of Piers Ploughman. In Danish '*spog*' means a joke, trick, or prank, and hence the character of Robin Goodfellow. In Iceland Puki is regarded as an evil sprite; and in the language of that country, '*at pukra*' means both to make a murmuring noise and to steal clandestinely. The

names of these spirits seem to have originated in their boisterous temper—'spuken,' Germ. to make a noise: 'spog,' Dan. obstreperous mirth; 'pukke,' Dan. to boast, scold. The Germans use 'pochin' in the same figurative sense, though literally it means to strike, beat; and is the same with our *poke*."

However varied in name, the persons and attributes of these immaterial beings have no variance which will not readily be accounted for by the difference of climate, territorial surface, and any priority that one tribe had gained over another in the march of mind. The relics of such a system were much more abundant half-a-century ago, and many a tale of love and violence, garnished with the machinery of that *mythos*, might have been gleaned from the unwritten learning of the people. Who would expect to find amongst the rudest of the Irish peasantry—whose ancestors never knew the use of letters, and by whom, even down to living generations, the English tongue has not been spoken—a number of fictions, amongst the rest the tale of Cupid and Psyche—closely corresponding to that of the Greeks?<sup>[7]</sup> Who that has been a child does not recollect the untiring delight with which he listened to those ingenious arithmetical progressions, reduced to poetry, called "*The House that Jack built*," and the perils of "*The Old Woman with the Pig*?" Few even of those in riper years would suspect their Eastern origin. In the *Sepher Haggadah* there is an ancient parabolical hymn, in the Chaldee language, sung by the Jews at the feast of the Passover, and commemorative of the principal events in the history of that

people. For the following literal translation we are indebted to Dr. Henderson, the celebrated orientalist:—

"1. *A kid, a kid* my father bought,  
For two pieces of money.  
A kid, a kid.

"2. Then came *the cat*, and ate the kid,  
That my father bought,  
For two pieces of money.  
A kid, a kid.

"3. Then came *the dog*, and bit the cat,  
That ate the kid,  
That my father bought,  
For two pieces of money.  
A kid, a kid.

"4. Then came *the staff*, and beat the dog,  
That bit the cat,  
That ate the kid,  
That my father bought,  
For two pieces of money.  
A kid, a kid.

"5. Then came *the fire*, and burnt the staff,  
That beat the dog,  
That bit the cat,  
That ate the kid,  
That my father bought,  
For two pieces of money.  
A kid, a kid.